

Message Text

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60

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-02 DHA-02 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07

COME-00 SSO-00 (ISO) W

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P R 091740Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL MAZATLAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0945

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS MAZATLAN 0462

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJ: HIGHWAY ASSAULTS ON US. CITIZENS INCREASING

REF: MAZATLAN'S 0243, 0284, 0303, 0314, 0315, 0421, 0423.

1. ON NOVEMBER 4, JOHN PENA AND ELYCE VOLL OF SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA REPORTED THAT ON THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON AT 4:00 P.M. WHILE DRIVING ON THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY NEAR CULIACAN, THEY WERE FORCED OFF THE ROAD BY TWO ARMED BANDITS WHO ROBBED THEM OF THEIR 1974 FORD CAMPER AND ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS.

2. ALSO ON NOVEMBER 4, THREE TOURISTS FROM LOS ANGELES, FRANCISCO TIRADO AND TWO ACCOMPANYING PASSENGERS TRAVELLING ON THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY NEAR GUAMUCHIL, SINALOA WERE ROBBED OF THEIR LATE MODEL CAMPER AND POSSESSIONS IN THE SAME MANNER.

3. ON NOVEMBER 6 MERLE MORSE, AGED 76, AND DEBORAH SOBEL KAHN, AGED 73, OF NOGALES, ARIZONA, WERE ROBBED OF THEIR 1975 FORD AND ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY NEAR CULIACAN.

4. IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INCIDENTS, WILLIAM S. BROWNE REPORTED TO THE CONSULATE ON NOV. 1, THAT HE AND TWO COMPANIONS WERE FORCED OFF THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY NEAR
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CULIACAN BY A TAXI FROM WHICH THREE ARMED MEN EMERGED WHO

DEMANDED ALL THEIR MONEY. IN THIS CASE, THE BANDITS DID NOT STEAL THEIR CAMPER.

5. CONSUL WAS INFORMED ON OCTOBER 24 BY MAZATLAN FUNERAL HOME, THAT A MALE BODY HAD BEEN FOUND ON THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY NEAR MARMOL (CLOSE TO CULIACAN) WITH NO IDENTIFICATION. FUNERAL DIRECTOR BELIEVED BODY TO BE THAT OF AN AMERICAN. POLICE HAVE NOW TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED SUBJECT AS LEONARD DAY, 53 YEARS OLD, MEDICAL ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT OF VA HOSPITAL SEPULVEDA, CALIFORNIA. (IF IDENTIFICATION LATER PROVES POSITIVE, DETAILS WILL BE SENT SEPTEL) ACCORDING TO INFORMATION PROVIDED BY VA HOSPITAL, DAY WAS DRIVING 1976 YELLOW PACER AND HAD CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF MONEY AND OTHER POSSESSIONS IN CAR. POSSIBILITY SUBJECT MURDERED WHILE RESISTING HIJACKING.

6. THESE HIJACKINGS USUALLY OCCUR IN MID AFTERNOON NEAR CULIACAN ON THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY. ALL VICTIMS REPORT THAT THEIR ASSAILANTS WERE HEAVILY ARMED TEEN AGERS.

7. I HAVE DISCUSSED THE FOREGOING INCIDENTS WITH POLICE AND TOURISM AUTHORITIES AND HAVE INDICATED TO THEM THAT THESE INCIDENTS ARE HEAVILY PUBLICIZED IN THE U.S., AND ARE PUTTING DAMPER ON PLANNED TRIPS TO MEXICO. FEDERAL TURISM DELEGATES ARE WELL AWARE OF EFFECTS OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY AND BEMOAN LACK OF COOPERATION OF APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN APPREHENDING THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE WANTON ASSAULTS.

8. SINCE THESE INCIDENTS STARTED IN MAY 1976, ONLY FOUR TEEN AGERS HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED AND TWO VEHICLES RECOVERED. MATTHEWS

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